# Lightning strike identified as cause of deadly South Fork fire in New Mexico



A lightning strike has been identified as the cause of a deadly wildfire in southern New Mexico, known as the South Fork fire. The fire, which erupted on June 17, 2024, amidst high temperatures, has resulted in the deaths of two people and the destruction of 1,400 structures. As of July 3, the blaze has scorched over 25,000 acres and is 87 percent contained, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The fire began on the Mescalero Apache Reservation and also affected the village of Ruidoso and surrounding areas, prompting widespread evacuations. The lightning strike was confirmed as the origin by eight investigative agencies, including the FBI, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Land Management. Meanwhile, another fire in the region, the Salt fire, which started on the same day, remains under investigation and is 84 percent contained. Authorities are offering a $10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for the Salt fire.